

03 April 2020

Dear Senior Minister

Subject: Anglican Church Growth Corporation 2020-2022 Strategic Plan

What a time to be releasing a strategic plan!! The Coronavirus pandemic has seen all strategic playbooks thrown out the window. So why send this document to you now? There are a few reasons:

1. The attached strategic plan is about positive change. Many initiatives in the Plan will change the way we will use property and buildings in the future to facilitate ministry to our congregations and to the communities in which we exist.
2. The Coronavirus will result in significant change. At least in the short to medium term, people will be more in need of care and compassion than has been the case for the majority of our lifetimes. Our churches and the people in their congregations are well positioned to demonstrate that care and compassion because Christ has modelled that behaviour to us first.
3. With many of you working from home, you will have some additional time, that you would have spent commuting, to read the detail in the strategic plan.

We are at an interesting pivot point. Our society has been moving at pace away from God. This virus has forced everyone to stop! This pause creates an opportunity for people to reflect on life and the constant pursuit of possessions. The virus has demonstrated how we cannot depend on the economy or possessions or the Government or the wealth we have collected. Within a relatively short space of time, all of that is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

During the months ahead, there will be a need for Christ's love to be visible and demonstrable. It will be interesting to see how God will work through his people to enable them to care for our communities in ways we haven't thought about before. When faced with the god's of sport, going to the pub or club, and being entertained 24/7 being not available, it will be interesting to see if technology can break the barriers to people coming into virtual church. When we come through this pandemic and we move back into a new normal, the next few months could determine whether society views Christians as the glue that holds society together because of Christ's love, or if we are even more irrelevant than we were perceived to be when we could meet with people face-to-face.

The attached strategic plan contains a range of initiatives to change the way we use church properties to promote the Gospel. We will continue to progress these initiatives through the uncertain times ahead and, hopefully and prayerfully, we will get to the other side with robust parish ministry and evangelism plans that use buildings and property in more innovative ways to help congregations know

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God better and that result in intentional “collisions” of people from church and non-church backgrounds. We will need to morph so that we can adapt to new ways of doing church, but the opportunities to connect with the surrounding communities are vast. The limitation is the willingness of Christians to share Christ. Just when we thought Greater Sydney and Wollongong society was seeing Christianity as, at best irrelevant, we see this event in history remind us of Matthew 19:25-26 talking about how hard it would be for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven:

“When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, ‘Who then can be saved?’. Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible’”.

The Growth Corporation is taking a Diocesan-wide view on how we plan, manage and activate our properties to facilitate mission and create more opportunities to interact with the people of the communities in which we are located. As previous generations have left a positive legacy for us, we want to be godly stewards of the resources provided by generations past, but also to provide future generations with property resources that will be used to facilitate Gospel ministry in generations to come. This includes physical buildings and property, but also developing sustainable funding mechanisms to enable ministry and evangelism to be supported without burdening future generations with financial constraints.

I commend this first Strategic Plan of the Growth Corporation to you and look forward to working with you, under God, to implement this across the Diocese.

Yours sincerely



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